

Think quick, listen closely, stay focused, work together! Four fun theatre games!

-Stuart Gibbs, *Gluck Fellow*.

Introduction:

These theatre games are designed for students to learn ensemble building, to practice working together, to enhance non-verbal communication skills, to practice close listening, and to focus energy. They are fast-paced and fun, and require quick thinking, imagination, physical coordination, and short-term and long-term memory. You can use these games as a brain break to energize the students, as well as a focused activity when their energy is too high. The games can be played at any age level. Students will enjoy the silliness, the challenge, and the competition (though not against one another!). You can also easily adjust these games to reinforce academic subjects, simply by inserting vocabulary and concepts you want them to be more familiar with into the structure of the game. These students will be learning or consolidating concepts in a fun, physical manner. Above all, they are easy to play and lots of fun!

1) SNEAKY STATUES

Sneaky statues is an independently driven group game that enhances focus and channels physical energy. No materials required; All ages

How to play:

- You, the leader, are “the Guard” in this statue museum (once the students are familiar with the game, a student can be chosen to be “guard”).
- All the students find their own spot in the space and freeze
- The guard moves around the space trying to catch the statues moving, or using a tactic to make them move (without touching them), ie making them laugh.
- Statues must try to move around when they guard can’t see them; they cannot remain stationary the whole game (that’s just statues, not *sneaky* statues).
- If a statue is caught moving, he or she you must sit down to the side until the next round.

Have fun with it! You can play with music. You can choose a theme for the statues based around something the students have been learning (ancient Egypt, forest animals, etc.)

2) SHAPE SHIFTERS

Shape shifters is an ensemble game that works on non-verbal communication skills, teamwork, and group consciousness. No materials required; All ages

How to Play:

- All the students stand in the center of the space. You the leader will call out a shape (circle, square, triangle). The players then create the shape as a group!

- Players *may not talk* to any other player, and they may not physically move another player into position.
- There is a time limit (usually 5 seconds for older students, 10 seconds for younger).
- All players must be a part of the shape to finish!

After doing geometrical shapes you can move on to objects: firetruck, elephant, Eiffel Tower, etc. You can also explore how the objects would move, maintaining the shape. If you want, pick things you've been studying (ie, a molecule!).

3) BIBBITY-BIBBITY-BOP

Bibbity-Bibbity-Bop is a quick thinking game played in a circle to practice close listening and quick thinking. No Materials required; All ages

How to play:

- The students stand in a good-sized circle around the leader (you).
- The leader approaches a student, points, and says "Bibbity-Bibbity-Bop." The student's job is to say "Bop!" before you finish. If you finish your phrase before the student says bop, they are out and have a seat where they are.
- If you say anything else besides "Bibbity-Bibbity-Bop," for example, if you just say "Bop," the students must stay silent. If they say "Bop" in response to anything but they command phrase, they are also out.
- Last person standing (or last two or three) is/are the winner(s).

Mix it up to make it even more challenging:

- You can add a second layer to the game by using some commands that require three students to strike a pose or do a movement
- An example might be: point to a student and say "Toaster," requiring that student to jump up and down like toast and the two nearest students on either side to stick their arms out toward the toast and form a toaster shape.
- Students have 5 seconds to respond or they are out and must sit down.

You can use these extra commands to reinforce learning! Say "Egypt" and have one student become the Sphinx while the other two form a pyramid! Have fun!

4) SMITHSONIAN

Smithsonian is an ensemble game to help students learn or consolidate concepts/vocab. No materials required, All Ages

Preparation: Beforehand, decide on at between 6 and 9 terms, titles or objects that you would like players to remember, understand or be familiar with in the subject matter you are studying. For example, in elementary Geography you might choose 8 different vocabulary words or geographic features. Write down your ideas. Now comes the fun part: each idea must then have a physical gesture, pose or action related to it.

For instance, in Geography example below, you will see that River’s action is to have two students lie head to head and wind their bodies and wiggle like a current, forming a river. It is important, if you are playing the elimination version of the game, that you have a command that requires four students and one that requires five.

For example: **Geography**

River (2 students)	Two students lie head to head and wind their bodies and wiggle like a current.
Mountains (3)	Three students form a triangle and reach their hands toward the ceiling and each other, forming a peak
Plains (1)	Every student freezes like a prairie dog smelling danger. They must stay frozen until you say “Desert”
Desert (2)	One student on bended, asking with open hands for water. The other student stands in the shape of a cactus.
Rural (1)	All students move to the left side of the room, skipping as though riding a horse.
Urban (1)	All students move to the right side of the room, yelling “Wait, hold that bus!!”
City (4)	Two students stand in front, to students in back, as though riding in a car. You can call out “speed bump” to make them jump (or big speedbump, little speedbump)
Ocean (5)	In a group of five, holding hands, the students spread a wave back and forth with their arms (raising and lowering side to side, like at a stadium)

How to play:

- Players stand in the center of the room.
- Together they all learn the gestures and code words.
- Announce that the game is now beginning. Much like Simon Says, if a player fails to follow direction, or is caught without the right number of partners, they are out.
- Players who get “out” can wait to the side for the round to finish, or they can become callers and try to trick the remaining players.

Again, this game can be matched to most anything you are studying. Science, History, Literature- just use the subject vocabulary as commands and choose actions that are fun, silly, and related to the content.